DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 375 224 UD 030 127

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TITLE Growing Up with a Single Parent. What Hurts, What Helps.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-674-36407-4
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 204p.
AVAILABLE FROM Harvard University Press, 79 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138 ($19.95).
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Child Advocacy; *Child Development; Child Support; Community Support; Divorce; Family Environment; Family Income; *Family Structure; *Futures (of Society); Marital Instability; *One Parent Family; *Parent Child Relationship; Policy Formation; Success; Surveys

ABSTRACT

Using information from four national surveys and a decade of research, this book demonstrates the connection between family structure and a child's prospects for success. It shows how divorce, particularly with often-attendant drops in income, parental involvement, and access to community resources, diminishes children's chances for wellbeing. It is revealed that children whose parents live apart are twice as likely to drop out of high school as those in two-parent families, one and a half times as likely to be idle in young adulthood, and twice as likely to become single parents themselves. Additionally, data show that some of the advantages often associated with being white are really a function of family structure and that some of the advantages associated with having educated parents evaporate when those parents separate. The concluding chapter offers recommendations for rethinking our current policies. The authors explain why it is imperative that more of the costs of raising children be shifted from mothers to fathers and from parents to society at large, as well as why universal assistance programs that benefit low-income two-parent families and single mothers must be developed. Appendixes contain data and variables from the studies, bivariate probit models, and sex-difference factors statistical tables. (GLR)

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